



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/515,428	02/29/2000	Paul E. Burton	2000B010	1445

23455 7590 08/26/2004

EXXONMOBIL CHEMICAL COMPANY
P O BOX 2149
BAYTOWN, TX 77522-2149

EXAMINER

PRICE, ELVIS O

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
----------	--------------

1621

DATE MAILED: 08/26/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	09/515,428	BURTON, PAUL E.	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	Elvis O. Price	1621	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-14 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) ____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-14 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 29 February 2000 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. ____ |
| 3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date <u>5/26/00;11/9/00</u> . | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: ____ |

Art Unit: 1621

DETAILED ACTION

Claims 1-14 are pending in the application.

Information Disclosure Statement

The information disclosure statements comply with the provisions of 37 CFR 1.97, 1.98 and MPEP02 § 609. They have been placed in the application file, and the information referred to therein have been considered as to the merits.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

The factual inquiries set forth in *Graham v. John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 148 USPQ 459 (1966), that are applied for establishing a background for determining obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) are summarized as follows:

1. Determining the scope and contents of the prior art.
2. Ascertaining the differences between the prior art and the claims at issue.
3. Resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.
4. Considering objective evidence present in the application indicating obviousness or nonobviousness.

Claims 1-11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bezman {US Pat. 4,405,822}, in view of Applicant's admission {present specification, page 6, lines 7-15}

Applicant claim, in brief, a process for hydrolyzing di-isopropyl ether comprising feeding a stream comprising di-isopropyl ether into a distillation column having therein a

Art Unit: 1621

solid acid catalyst suitable for catalyzing the hydrolysis of di-isopropyl ether to isopropanol, and hydrolyzing said ether to isopropanol.

Bezman teaches an olefin catalyzed hydration process in which, inter-alia, recycled di-isopropyl ether is hydrated (hydrolyzed), with a solid acid catalyst, to produce isopropanol followed by subsequent distillation of the isopropanol product (see Col. 2, lines 33-49; Col. 3, lines 3-58; Col. 4, lines 32-68 through Col. 5, lines 1-59 and the Example). The difference between the presently claimed invention and what the Bezman reference teaches is that the Bezman reference does not teach carrying out the isopropanol synthesis using catalytic distillation. However, applicant admits that catalytic distillation is recognized in the art as being an advantageous technique because it allows for a higher degree of conversion in addition to being a more economically viable technique (see page 6, lines 7-15 of the present specification).

Therefore, the presently claimed invention would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art because Bezman teaches an olefin catalyzed hydration process in which, inter-alia, recycled di-isopropyl ether is hydrated (hydrolyzed), with a solid acid catalyst, to produce isopropanol followed by subsequent distillation of the isopropanol product and it is common knowledge within the art that catalytic distillation is an advantageous technique over batchwise or continuous processes which employ separate distillation methods.

One having ordinary skill in the art, desiring to prepare isopropanol more economically and with a high degree of conversion, would have been motivated to incorporate the catalytic distillation technique in the Bezman process for converting,

Art Unit: 1621

inter-alia, di-isopropyl ether into isopropanol. Therefore, the presently claimed invention would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Elvis O. Price whose telephone number is 571 272-0644. The examiner can normally be reached on 8:30 am to 5:00 pm; Mon-Fri.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Johann R. Richter can be reached on 571 272-0646. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703 872-9306.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is 703 308-1235.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Elvis O. Price', with a stylized, cursive script.

Elvis O. Price

August 23, 2004